### Country
Cyprus

### Primary Image

![Image of children playing with a parachute](image_url)

### Primary Image Caption

Imagine is a breakthrough Peace Education project implemented by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research under the auspices of the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus.

### Major Branches
- Divided Societies
- Global Citizenship Education (GCED)
- Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

### Significant Approaches & Themes
Historical Context

The island of Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea with an area of 9,251km² (3,572 mi²). The population of the island is estimated to be just under 1.3 million people. The island today is a popular tourist destination. Cyprus has two major ethnic populations: Greek Cypriots, who make up approximately 78% of the island’s population, and Turkish Cypriots, who make up about 18% of the population. There are minority ethnic and religious groups on the island as well, including Armenians, Maronites, and Latins. Cyprus has been divided since the violent intercommunal clashes between 1963 and 1967. Following these events, in 1974, Turkey invaded after a failed military coup attempt to unify Cyprus and Greece and the island is since divided in the northern part (in which Turkish Cypriots live) and the southern (Republic of Cyprus controlled) part (in which Greek Cypriots live). In addition, there are still two British military bases while the UN Buffer Zone or Green line or Dead Zone runs from one side of the island to the other. The Republic of Cyprus, in the south, is a member state of the European Union, and the international community recognizes it as the island’s official government. The northern part, known as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, is only recognized by Turkey. The rest of the international community considers this territory part of the Republic of Cyprus. However, the island is de facto partitioned and the area of the Turkish Cypriot community will be referred to as the north and the area of the Greek Cypriot community will be referred to as the south. The official language in the TCC is Turkish, and most Turkish Cypriots, the majority of whom live in the north, are Sunni Muslim. The GCC recognizes both Greek and Turkish as official languages. The south also recognizes Armenian and Cypriot Arabic as minority languages. Additionally, proficiency in English is generally high in Cyprus. The majority population in the south is Greek Cypriot, most of whom belong to the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus. There are newly arrived populations, both migrants and seasonal workers as well as asylum seekers and refugees from the Middle East and Africa. There are small populations of religious minorities in the north and the south, including Bahai, Catholic, Jewish, Protestant Christian, Maronite, Armenian Apostolic, and non-religious communities.

In 1963, only 3 years after independence from Britain, intercommunal violence broke out, because of proposed changes to the constitution brought forward by the Greek Cypriot Archbishop Makarios III, the island’s first elected president. The British military created the ceasefire line known as the Green Line, or Buffer Zone, which is still maintained by the United Nations (UN). Intercommunal hostilities continued through the 1960s, which nearly led to war between Greece and Turkey. In 1974, a coup d’état led by the Greek junta government and EOKAB’, a Greek Cypriot paramilitary organization overthrew the government and installed a nationalist government. This is widely considered to have been an attempt to annex Cyprus to Greece. This prompted the Turkish military intervention of Cyprus. This led to mass forced dislocations of Greek Cypriots from the north to the south and Turkish Cypriots from the south to the north as they fled from the militaries, though many Turkish Cypriots moved earlier during the intercommunal fights or after as part of the agreed population exchanges. The ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’ declared independence in 1983, which was rejected by both the UN and the Republic of Cyprus. There have been many attempts at negotiations between the two communities over the years, but so far, they have failed. While the regime in the north is not internationally recognized, the territory continues to function as a separate entity from the Republic of Cyprus. The restrictions upon movement across the Green Line were relaxed in 2003; prior to this movement across the Buffer Zone was very limited.

Current Issues / Conflicts

- Relatively low rate of intercommunal interaction
- Stalemate in the peace negotiations. Different interpretations, at times, in regards to the desired solution. The Bi-zonal Bi-communal Federation is being discussed under the UN.
- Right of return and recovery of lost homes and property,
- Security (i.e. troops of other countries, especially Turkey and Greece) will remain stationed after a possible solution
- Lack of a shared language
- Two different educational systems and differing historical narratives
**Peace Education Efforts**

Much of the peace education efforts in Cyprus are civil society based, with financial support from the international community. Programs tend to focus on working with children and youth. Before the opening of the Green Line in 2003, movement between communities was extremely limited, which in turn limited the ability of peace education programs to work inter-communally. Because Cyprus is a divided society, peace education work emphasizes the importance of contact theory through intercommunal work. To do this work, starting in the 1990’s, many programs took youth out of the country for intercommunal and cross-cultural experiences. Such programs include Seeds of Peace and the Fulbright Youth Summer Camp at the School for International Training in Vermont, both programs brought youth to peacebuilding summer camps in the United States, as well as programs like Creating Friendships for Peace (formerly known as the Cyprus Friendship Program), which fosters friendships through homestays in the United States. These programs gave many teenagers their first opportunity to meet someone from the other community on neutral ground.

Many of these programs continue to exist, but since 2003 more Cyprus based intercommunal programs have emerged. Many of these programs take place, either fully or partially, in the Buffer Zone. Within the Buffer Zone, many intercommunal cultural, artistic and educational events and activities take place at the Home for Cooperation, which was established by Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR) in 2011 and serves as a community centre for intercommunal cooperation. There are two general categories of programs: those which focus directly on peace education and programs that focus on other topics with intercommunal contact and peace education goals. Direct peace education programs tend to focus on topics such as mediation, intercommunal dialogue, and anti-racism. Such programs include the “Imagine” Program, which focuses on anti-racism education and education which seeks to promote a culture of peace. Indirect peace programs also use contact theory in their work, promoting peace through communal interaction through other programs. A few examples include PeacePlayers International, Columba-Hypatia Astronomy for Peace, and the Intercommunal Children’s Choir, these programs bring Greek and Turkish Cypriot children and youth together through sports, scientific exploration, and music respectively.

Several NGOs also work with teachers and others in the education field, to equip educators to work for peaceful co-existence and to overcome divisions. These programs include the National Training Course on Human Rights Education, which brought together teachers and professors from both communities. There are also monocommunal and bicommunal teacher trainings within the Imagine program implemented by AHDR. AHDR has previously produced multiple supplementary teaching materials for teachers across the divide. These are on a variety of topics such as Introducing Gender in History Teaching, Oral History, Mixed Villages Nicosia is calling booklets. Please find a full list of the publications here: Supplementary Educational Materials AHDR Cyprus

Within formal education, secondary and primary school students and teachers in Greek Cypriot schools are offered a restorative justice-based program, called the School Mediation Programme. The program trains both teachers and students to be mediators, through conflict resolution, remedial and restorative justice, and tolerance education. Other peace education initiatives in schools focus on citizenship, global citizenship, gender equality, sustainable development, environmentalism, anti-racism, interculturalism, and human rights. Additionally, since the opening of checkpoints across the Green Line, some Turkish Cypriot parents have chosen to send their children to English-speaking schools in the south, meaning more students are experiencing integrated education. While most of these...
schools are private, the English School is a public-private school with influence from the government of the Republic. Staff members at this school are trained on peace education practices.

In addition to the geographical challenge of peace education on the island of Cyprus, the language barrier between the communities presents a further challenge for peace educators. Since the communities speak separate languages, Greek and Turkish respectively, programs often use English as a neutral facilitation language, and translation is used as necessary. Minority groups, non-Turkish and non-Greek speaking students and individuals, are also able to participate in certain activities as the facilitation language tends to be in English.

**Legislative and Policy Initiatives**

Legislation and policy initiatives around peace education in Cyprus are controversial. There are separate school systems in the north and the south, with virtually no inter-communication. These separate education systems mean most students are educated in segregated, single-identity environments. Consequently, Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot students are taught different versions of history, which are nationalistic and antagonistic towards the other group. Proposed peace education policies seek to create a shared historical narrative, which exacerbates existing fears and insecurities in the communities. These fears stoke discourse which poses peace education as a threat to ethnic identities. The discourse around peace education also reflects asymmetric power relationships between the communities.

The first peace education effort within formal education was implemented in the 2008-2009 school year by the education system in the south. The government of the Republic of Cyprus promoted an education initiative which sought to develop “a culture of peaceful coexistence” between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. This policy was met with strong reactions from both teachers and the wider Greek Cypriot community. Many of the reactions focused on the “appropriateness” of the initiative given the divided society and traumas from the conflict, including missing persons and refugees. There is the belief that peace education, especially promotion of reconciliation, should not be part of education in schools until a political settlement is achieved.

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According to Global Education in Cyprus: The European Global Education Peer Review Process National Report on Global Education in Cyprus: “In its Strategic Plan from 2018-2020, the Ministry of Education and Culture [of the Republic of Cyprus] describes its work as implementing an educational policy that embodies the values of equality, inclusiveness, creativity and innovation, and aiming at life-long, balanced development whilst at the same time strengthening culture and cultural creativity. The vision is to form literate citizens with skills, responsibility, democratic ethos, historical identity as well as respect for diversity.” The issue with the many of the formal policies is the gap between policy rhetoric and practice, as well as between intentions and outcomes.

Training opportunities on a variety of topics are provided to teachers by Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot teachers trade unions, Pedagogical Institute, Ataturk Teachers Academy, educational authorities in both communities and civil society organizations.

**Policy / Legislation**
- None/Ambiguous

**Teacher Training**
- Optional

**SDG Indicator 4.7.1 Data / Analysis**

Mapping Peace Education: Cyprus

“Mapping Peace Education” is a global research initiative coordinated by the Global Campaign for Peace Education.
No data related to indicator 4.7.1 is currently reported. For a general overview of SDGs, please visit the Republic of Cyprus Second Voluntary National Review: Sustainable Development Goals (June 2021).

Secondary Image

Home for Cooperation is the hub of intercommunal collaboration in Cyprus, based in the UN Buffer Zone in divided Nicosia.

Peace Education Organizations, Projects, & Models
- Association for Historical Dialogue and Research
- Intercommunal Children’s Choir
- Columba-Hypatia Astronomy for Peace
- “Imagine” Program
- Home for Cooperation
- Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology
- Creating Friendships for Peace, formerly known as The Cyprus Friendship Program
- Future Worlds Center
- Peace Centre Cyprus
- PeacePlayers International, Cyprus
- School for International Training in Vermont
- Seeds of Peace, Cyprus Program
- Youth for Exchange and Understanding Cyprus

News
Access the comprehensive archive of news articles related to Cyprus on the Global Campaign for Peace Education website
For a more customizable search, please visit the Global Campaign for Peace Education Clearinghouse

- Imagine Project receives Global Education award
- Over 1,200 students and 162 teachers from both sides of Cyprus brought together in 2019/2020
- Bi-communal school leaders attend conference on peace education in Cyprus
- Columba - Hypatia: Astronomy for Peace
- EU supports proposal from Bi-communal Technical Committee of Education in Cyprus to pilot peace education materials
- Imagine programme helping to reconcile divided Cyprus
- Teachers from both sides attend seminars on peace education (Cyprus)
- Students from across the divide come together in Nicosia
- “A Peace of Us” Training Course on Human Rights Education

Research

Access the comprehensive archive of research articles related to Cyprus on the Global Campaign for Peace Education website
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- A Partnership Between Peace Education and Conflict Resolution: The Case of Cyprus, by Maria Hadjipavlou
- Christina Hajisoteriou & Panayiotis Angelides (2013) The politics of intercultural education in Cyprus, Education Inquiry, 4:1, 103-123.
- Education in Multicultural Cyprus, edited by Psaltis et al, 2017
- Experiential Activities in Mediation-Based Training: Cyprus, 1997-2013, by A. Marco Turk and John Ungerleider
- Teachers’ strategies of everyday diplomacy in peace education: A case study of the “infrapolitics” of peacebuilding in Greek-Cypriot schools - Michalinos Zembylas, Loizos Loukaides, 2021

Where to Study Peace Education

- Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR)

Visit the Global Directory: Where to Study Peace Education for where to study in Cyprus and around the world
Country Expert 1
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Bio - Country Expert 1
Loizos Loukaidis holds a BA in Primary Education from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece and an MA in Peace Education from the UN mandated University for Peace in Costa Rica where he specifically sought to examine the viewing of History Teaching as a vehicle for promoting a Culture of Peace. Loizos has extensive experience in the education sector both as a Primary School Teacher and a Peace Education activist, project coordinator and researcher. Read More...

Country Expert 2
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Kemal Aşik completed his undergraduate studies in the Department of English Translation and Interpretation at Hacettepe University, Ankara. He continued his studies with a Master’s degree in the field of Communication and Media Studies at the Eastern Mediterranean University, Cyprus with a specific focus on representation of gender in media. He is currently part of the AHDR Team and works as a Project Assistant and trainer for the ‘Imagine’ Project.

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Mica Segal de la Garza is responsible for the Historical Context section of the Cyprus profile and is the coordinator for the Mapping Peace Ed project with the Global Campaign for Peace Education. Read more...

Citation